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Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/137.

In her report, the Special Representative provides an overview of major initiatives and developments aimed at sustaining and scaling up efforts to safeguard children's right to be free from violence. The report is in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its distinct target to end all forms of violence against children, and builds upon the commemoration in 2016 of the tenth anniversary of the submission to the General Assembly of the United Nations study on violence against children.

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Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

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I. Introduction

1. In the present report, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children reviews key developments promoted at the global, regional and national levels to enhance the protection of children from violence.

2. The Special Representative is guided by General Assembly resolution 62/141, in which the Assembly established the mandate, and acts as a bridge builder and a global, independent advocate for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children. In its resolution 70/137, the Assembly expressed support for the work of the Special Representative and recommended that the Secretary-General extend the mandate for a further period of three years, and maintain support for the effective and independent performance and sustainability of the mandate, funded from the regular budget.

3. The Special Representative remains strongly committed to accelerating progress in the protection of children from violence and to seizing the unique opportunity presented by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The inclusion in the 2030 Agenda of a distinct target, target 16.2, to eliminate all forms of violence against children is an historic achievement that can galvanize political will and reignite action to build a world free from fear and from violence for all, leaving no child behind.

4. Over the past year, the Special Representative has promoted important processes and mobilization initiatives to strengthen the protection of children from violence around the world with national authorities, United Nations agencies, regional organizations, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, the private sector and the media, as well as child-led networks. The year was marked by the adoption of several regional plans of action to prevent and eliminate violence against children and the promotion of significant partnerships to mobilize support for their protection. At the national level, important progress was made with the enactment of new legislation to ban violence in all its forms, the adoption of policy frameworks to guide implementation, and the further consolidation of data and research to inform evidence-based action.

5. The year was also marked by the adoption by the World Health Assembly of resolution WHA69.5,[1] in which the Assembly endorsed the World Health Organization (WHO) global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children. WHO also released INSPIRE,[2] a package of evidence-based strategies to prevent and respond to violence against children. Furthermore, a global study led by ECPAT-End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes was issued to shed light on and reinforce collective efforts for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.[3] And the Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, adopted by an inter-agency working group meeting in Luxembourg, were released to provide conceptual clarity to actions aimed at the protection of children, close legal loopholes and address misinterpretations that may put their safety at risk .[4]

6. Protection of children online remained high on the agenda of the Special Representative. In this regard, she continued to support important multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation

[1] See http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_R5-en.pdf.
[2] See www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire/en/.
[3] See http://globalstudysectt.org/.
[4] See http://luxembourgguidelines.org/english-version/.

Online.[5] WePROTECT has secured high-level commitments from Governments, the information and communications technology industry, international organizations and civil society. It supports comprehensive national action on prevention and response to inform and empower children and to fight impunity within and across borders.

7. As these examples illustrate, the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children (see A/61/299) remain as valid today as they were 10 years ago, and their potential for promoting a quantum leap in global efforts to protect children from violence has not diminished. Nor has the urgency of this cause. As a recent study has highlighted, over the past year at least one billion children between 2 and 17 years of age — half the world's children — endured some form of violence.[6]

8. Trafficking in persons continues to increase, and in some regions more than 60 per cent of victims are children. Countless millions of children are involved in exploitative work and slavery-like practices. In developing countries, one in every three girls is married before age 18 and one in nine is married before age 15, and children below 15 years represent 8 per cent of victims of homicides globally.

9. Violence in the community is widespread. As highlighted by the Special Representative in her study *Protecting Children Affected by Armed Violence in the Community*,[7] launched during the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, held in October 2016 in Quito, 300 million children below the age of 5 are thought to be exposed to community violence. Indeed, in many parts of the world, armed violence is often associated with gang activities and organized crime, an environment of violence that shapes children's daily life and generates fear, insecurity, and a pervasive sense that impunity prevails.

10. Bullying and cyberbullying torment millions of children. These insidious forms of violence are among children's top concerns and a key reason why children contact a helpline. As highlighted by the Special Representative in her new study on this topic, *Ending the Torment: Tackling Bullying from the Schoolyard to Cyberspace*,[8] whether verbal, psychological or physical, whether in schools or outside of education facilities, bullying is often associated with discrimination and stereotyping of children who are in vulnerable situations (see box).

11. In his report on protecting children from bullying (A/71/213), the Secretary-General addressed this question in detail, presenting important findings from an online opinion poll promoted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative. More than 100,000 children and adolescents were surveyed and 9 out of 10 considered that bullying was a problem; two thirds reported that they had been victims and one third of these children had told no one.

[5] See www.weprotect.org/.

[6] See http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/01/25/peds.2015-4079.

[7] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.I.15.

[8] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.I.14.

Ending the torment: tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace

Protecting children from bullying is not just an ethical imperative or a laudable aim of public health or social policy; it is a question of human rights. Bullying is a hurtful and aggressive pattern of behaviour that is often part of a continuum, a torment that shapes children's lives at different moments and in different settings, from the schoolyard to the neighbourhood and, increasingly, into the online world.

Bullying has long been part of the social, community and school life of children. With the growing access to information and communications technologies and the wide use of smartphones by children and young people, online bullying — cyberbullying — has also become a source of concern. Spreading rumours, and posting false information, hurtful messages, embarrassing comments or photos, or being excluded from online networks can affect victims deeply. Anonymity may aggravate cyberbullying by encouraging young people to act in ways they would not in face-to-face interactions. In addition, cyberbullying can strike its victims at any time, and the harmful messages or materials can spread fast and far to an exponentially growing audience, multiplying the risks and its damaging impact.

Bullying affects children at different stages of their development, severely undermining their health, emotional well-being and school performance. It is often associated with profound feelings of dread, loneliness and helplessness. Victims may suffer sleep disorders, headaches, stomach pain, poor appetite and fatigue as well as feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, shame and, at times, suicidal thoughts. The psychological and emotional scars that are left may persist into adult life. Bullies themselves are also affected, and are also more likely than their peers to be involved in anti-social and risky behaviour later on in life. Furthermore, bullying can affect the whole school community, creating a climate of suspicion and uncertainty that can cause children to remain silent or to become complicit out of fear.

12. It is imperative that we act with the urgency that the situation requires. Guided by the human rights imperative of freeing children from violence and by the evidence gathered in recent years, we must seize the historic opportunity offered by the 2030 Agenda. Investing in violence prevention, protecting children's lives and futures and saving the resources of States will lead to a brighter future for all children.

II. Consolidating progress in the protection of children from violence

13. The past year has presented strategic opportunities and seen important developments in the elimination of violence against children at the global, regional and local levels. Ten years after the United Nations study on violence against children was submitted to the General Assembly, the protection of children from violence has evolved from a largely neglected topic into a global concern that is now included as a distinct target in the sustainable development agenda.

14. Joining forces with United Nations partners, the Special Representative has successfully promoted the mainstreaming of the protection of children from violence in the United Nations policy agenda. This collaborative effort has resulted in groundbreaking standards and action plans, including the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons,[9] as well as studies and mobilization campaigns that in turn have guided regional and national strategies, policies and measures for the prevention and elimination of violence against children.

15. The inclusion of the elimination of violence against children as a specific target and a cross-cutting concern in the 2030 Agenda stems from these converging efforts. It is the result, on the one hand, of the sense of urgency generated by the magnitude and impact of the problem and, on the other hand, by the growing body of evidence proving that there are solutions that work.

16. The agenda of the Special Representative has been guided by four strategic priorities: consolidating progress and mainstreaming implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study; ensuring that violence against children is given prominence on the global agenda; reinforcing regional processes to enhance the protection of children from violence; and addressing emerging concerns. Significant results have been achieved, including:

(a) Consolidation of the human rights foundation for protecting children from violence through the launch in 2010 of the campaign for universal ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This has led to a steady increase in the number of ratifications to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in force in 173 countries, and to the promotion of new international standards, including the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, in force in 29 States; the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (ILO); and the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; [10]

(b) Enhancing awareness and consolidating knowledge to prevent and respond to violence against children through international expert consultations, the development of research and the release of strategic thematic studies. As noted above, in 2016, two major studies *Protecting Children Affected by Armed Violence in the Community* and *Ending the Torment: Tackling Bullying from the Schoolyard to Cyberspace* were released. Previous studies by the Special Representative have addressed violence in schools and in the justice system; restorative justice for children; the rights of girls in the criminal justice system; child-sensitive counselling, and reporting and complaint mechanisms; protection of children from harmful practices; and the opportunities and risks for children associated with

[9] General Assembly resolution 64/293, annex.
[10] General Assembly resolution 69/194, annex.

information and communications technologies. Child-friendly materials were also produced to inform and empower children concerning their right to freedom from violence, most recently issued in Braille;

(c) Institutionalizing cooperation with regional organizations and institutions in all regions to advance implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study, with periodic review meetings to assess and accelerate progress, and the hosting of six annual cross-regional round tables on the protection of children from violence.[11] In 2016, the cross-regional round table was devoted to the development and implementation of regional plans supporting the 2030 Agenda and its targets on combating violence against children;

(d) Strengthening national implementation efforts to free children from violence, especially through the adoption and implementation of comprehensive multisectoral national strategies in more than 90 countries, most recently in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, Norway and Tunisia; the enactment of national legislation banning all forms of violence against children by more than 50 countries, most recently in Ireland, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Paraguay, Peru, Slovenia and Viet Nam; and the consolidation of data systems, including through national household surveys in Asia and Africa, including in Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania, while efforts are also under way in other countries, such as China;

(e) Promoting policy dialogue and global advocacy on neglected areas of concern and strengthening alliances among Governments, national institutions, civil society and faith-based organizations, academics and children's networks, including through the High Time to End Violence against Children initiative,[12] to mobilize action on and investment in the protection of children from violence. These efforts have been supported by over 160 missions to more than 60 countries in all regions.

III. Supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children

A. Addressing violence against children as a distinct priority concern in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

17. Realizing every child's right to freedom from violence is a fundamental element of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, a world in which every child grows up free from violence, abuse and exploitation. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the path towards achieving this noble goal.

18. In 2016, the international community commemorated the tenth anniversary of the submission to the General Assembly of the United Nations study on violence against children, and the twentieth anniversary of the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. The year 2016 also marked the first year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with its specific target (16.2) on ending all forms of violence against children and several other violence-related targets, including the

[11] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/1314.
[12] See www.endviolenceagainstchildren.org/.

elimination of child marriage, female genital mutilation and all forms of child labour; combating organized crime and reducing violent deaths; ensuring children's safety and protection in schools and in urban communities; and children's rights to access justice and information and to a legal identity. The marking of these important milestones provided an important opportunity to reignite commitments, to consolidate the gains that have been made, to fully grasp the lessons learned, and to redouble policy efforts to build a world where children can grow up free from violence, everywhere and at all times.

19. The inclusion of violence against children as a distinct concern in the global development agenda is an historic breakthrough and presents the global community with a strategic opportunity to transform target 16.2 into a reality for all the world's children. As the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda is now well under way, the chief priority of the Special Representative is supporting efforts to accelerate progress towards the achievement of all the violence-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially target 16.2. Protecting children from violence must not remain simply an ideal; indeed, the international community has a special responsibility to translate the ideal into tangible change for every child.

20. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals demonstrates a shared sense of purpose on the part of the international community and gives renewed impetus to global efforts. In addition, it conveys a heightened sense of urgency to act and ensure that no one is left behind. It is incumbent upon all Governments and other stakeholders to show leadership and to inspire and mobilize action.

21. This is no time for complacency. Around the world, millions of girls and boys of all ages continue to be exposed to appalling levels of violence, in their neighbourhoods, in their schools, in institutions aimed at their care and protection, and also within the home.

22. The roots of violence against children are multifaceted, and preventing and eliminating it require a multisectoral and integrated approach, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, violence goes hand in hand with vulnerability and deprivation, with high risks of poor health, poor school performance and, at times, long-term welfare dependency. Children exposed to violence — at home, in schools, in the community, at work, in care and justice institutions or online — are at greater risk of enduring cumulative acts of violence and engaging in aggressive and violent behaviour later in life.

23. Violence leaves long-lasting scars on children's lives, and often has irreversible consequences on their development and well-being and for their opportunities to thrive later in life. It also weakens the very foundation of social progress, generating huge costs for society, slowing economic development and eroding States' human and social capital. But through enhanced cooperation, and with serious investment in proven strategies for violence prevention, violence can become a thing of the distant past.

24. The 2030 Agenda is global and universal and has the unique potential to bring positive results to all parts of the world. But more importantly, it concerns all children. It is indeed critical to invest in children to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for present and future generations.

25. The value and success of the 2030 Agenda will be measured by the strategic action taken and tangible progress made in implementation on the ground, especially for those furthest behind, those who are the least visible and most forgotten children and who are often also the most at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation. It is therefore essential to promote the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategy that is supported by predictable resources; informed by solid evidence and robust, reliable and disaggregated data; and reviewed through an open, inclusive and periodic assessment of progress using internationally agreed benchmarks.

26. The experience gained from 10 years of implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study provides a solid basis to build upon. An increasing number of States have promoted awareness and social mobilization initiatives on this topic, and adopted legislation and national plans of action to prevent and respond to violence, along with mechanisms to collect and analyse data to inform planning, policy and budgetary decisions, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Translating the 2030 Agenda into national action is therefore under way, though much more needs to be done to mainstream the goals and targets into national development plans, strategies and actions that are nationally owned and to further the realization of children's rights.

27. Regional organizations and institutions have become crucial players in these efforts. Some intergovernmental regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Council of Europe, have already adopted new regional plans on violence against children aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Others, such as the League of Arab States, the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children and the High-level Authorities on Human Rights of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) are promoting similar efforts.

28. Such progress, however significant, needs to be further consolidated. The protection of children from violence cannot be an afterthought. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires strengthened partnerships and the mobilization of significant resources. Broad global alliances and partnerships uniting Governments, civil society, community and religious leaders, the private sector, international organizations and all other actors, including children themselves, are crucial to advancing this process. With this in mind, the Special Representative has strongly supported the establishment of significant initiatives, including the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, Alliance 8.7: working together to end child labour and modern slavery, the Global Youth Partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful Justice and Inclusive Societies. And for this reason, in March 2016, during the thirty-first regular session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Representative launched the High Time to End Violence against Children initiative, with a wide range of partners. The initiative was launched in recognition of the transformative power of leaders from all walks of life, and the determination of people to stand up for children and widen the movement to free all children from violence.

29. In the countdown to 2030, everybody counts and everybody is needed. The High Time initiative mobilizes innovative talent and creates a space to stimulate and support positive and concrete actions designed to ensure children's protection from violence and reach the violence-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially target 16.2. United Nations actors, Governments, regional intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, professional networks, the private sector and individuals have signed a pledge and committed to take concrete actions to widen circles of non-violence around children's lives.

30. The High Time online portal[13] provides information and resources to support global implementation efforts to end all forms of violence against children. This includes information on the ratification of child rights treaties, national legislation to ban all forms of violence, national strategies to prevent and respond to violence against children, data surveys to monitor progress, and child-sensitive mechanisms to address incidents of violence and assist child victims.

31. It is indeed high time to close the gap between the commitments to prevent and address violence against children and the action that can translate this goal into a reality for

[13] See www.violenceagainstchildren.org.

all children, leaving no child behind. It is high time to genuinely address the root causes of violence and promote a culture of respect for children's rights and of zero tolerance of violence. It is high time to mobilize and ignite the passion of all those who can actively engage in the creation of circles of non-violence in children's homes, schools and communities.

32. With the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda, the world has a unique opportunity to place children's freedom from violence at the heart of the policy agenda of every nation. To achieve lasting progress, hope must replace despair and confidence must supplant distrust. Talent must be placed at the service of the violence-free society we all aspire to build. And it is imperative to move with a deep sense of urgency.

B. Leadership and accountability in achieving progress in the protection of children from violence

33. Ensuring progress towards achievement of the violence-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially target 16.2, requires strong leadership, and effective accountability and monitoring mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. This is a particular concern of the Special Representative, who has promoted consideration of progress towards the violence-related Sustainable Development Goal targets in the reporting and monitoring processes of the treaty bodies and by the Human Rights Council, and in the voluntary national reviews of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

34. Human rights bodies and mechanisms must be strategic players and mainstream the violence-related goals and targets into their important work. The thematic focus of the 2017 annual day of discussion of the Human Rights Council on protection of the rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be a unique opportunity to further consolidate this vital process of integrating the human rights and development pillars of the new agenda.

35. As the central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, the high-level political forum on sustainable development is critical to ensuring that ending violence against children is at the heart of the implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals. The theme of the forum in 2016, "Ensuring that no one is left behind", was of particular relevance for children exposed to violence. Many of these children suffer in silence, loneliness and fear, and they are too often left behind in accessing appropriate care and support services to overcome their trauma, benefiting from recovery and reintegration and developing to their full potential.

36. In his progress report prepared for the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (E/2016/75), the Secretary-General highlighted that "various forms of violence against children are pervasive, including discipline that relies on physical punishment and psychological aggression". This topic was hardly addressed in the 22 voluntary national reviews.

37. The experience gained from the first set of voluntary national review reports for the high-level political forum will provide strategic input to future reporting, follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is essential that future voluntary national reviews recognize that sustainable development cannot be achieved while globally, one billion children suffer violence and its devastating consequences. To achieve target 16.2 and free all children from fear, it is crucial to be able to assess progress and identify challenges. The Special Representative is determined to support these reviews and build

upon the important experience gained from national human rights monitoring and reporting processes.

38. The 2017 high-level political forum will provide an important platform to assess progress in the protection of children from violence under the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The in-depth reviews at the high-level political forum of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending poverty, ensuring healthy lives and achieving gender equality will provide a critical reflection of how far States have come in ensuring a protective environment to offset the multiple, and often interconnected, vulnerabilities faced by children. For target 16.2 and the other violence-related targets, the 2017 voluntary national reviews are an important opportunity to highlight good practices, identify challenges and lessons learned, and renew commitments and the provision of reliable resources towards ending all forms of violence against children.

39. While the follow-up and review of progress will be pursued at all levels (national, regional and global), the lynchpin of monitoring is at the national level. States are expected to promote an inclusive, transparent and integrated process, supported by sound data and evidence. Participatory national consultations can provide a space for open, constructive and innovative dialogue with all stakeholders, including children, to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and to mobilize support to end violence in all its forms.

40. National reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals are a crucial contribution to ensuring investment in children and building a world in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation. The Special Representative is strongly committed to supporting the voluntary national review process, which has been high on the agenda of her field missions and informed her participation in high-level conferences and regional forums. This question was also the central theme in 2016 of her cross-regional round table, which annually brings together regional human rights bodies, organizations and institutions.

41. The identification of robust indicators on the prevalence of children's exposure to violence and its severity is another critical component of the Special Representative's advocacy efforts; this is crucial to capture the magnitude and impact of violence on children and to assess progress in the implementation of the violence-related goals, especially target 16.2. As a member of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, she strongly advocated for the inclusion of three indicators on children's exposure to sexual, physical and emotional violence, which were later adopted by the Statistical Commission.

42. The violence-related targets in the 2030 Agenda are achievable, but measuring progress needs to be supported by sound, disaggregated data and stronger national statistical capacity, backed by effective and accountable institutions to respond to research findings. Along with the consolidation of knowledge and data on children's exposure to multiple forms of violence and access to and utilization of response and rehabilitation services, it is essential to develop better tools, methodologies and research capacities to break the silence around incidents of violence, to identify children at greatest risk, to understand the root causes of violence and to provide sound evidence of what works and can help achieve lasting change.

43. With this in mind, the Special Representative will continue to advocate for the development of data collection methodologies and tools to improve national research capacities and monitoring efforts to assess the prevalence of violence against children, and to inform policy and budgetary decisions.

44. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires strengthened partnerships and the mobilization of significant resources. A broad global alliance uniting Governments, civil society, community and religious leaders, the private sector, international organizations and all other actors, including children themselves, is crucial for widening social support and

promoting implementation, follow-up and review of progress. For this reason, the Special Representative will continue to support the global initiatives and partnerships noted above, including the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

45. The Secretary-General launched the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children in July 2016, calling on it to help realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda of a world where all children live in peace. The Special Representative serves on the board and the executive committee of the Global Partnership, and through her global advocacy role promotes the shared mission of making the world a safe place for children and ending violence against children everywhere. The Global Partnership has the potential to harness collective efforts to promote steadily growing commitment and action for a world free from violence. It seeks to enhance political will to reach the Sustainable Development Goal targets on ending violence against children, accelerate action through the implementation of key interventions and strengthen collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders.

C. Honouring the pledge to leave no child behind and to reach the furthest behind first: children on the move

46. The past few years have witnessed growing numbers of children and adolescents on the move, alone or with their families, within and across countries. In 2015, children constituted more than half of the total refugee population, and more than 100,000 asylum claims were lodged by unaccompanied or separated children. More often than not, a child's decision to leave home is an escape strategy to secure safety and protection: to reach a safe haven from political instability, conflict, natural disasters, violence and exploitation. For children on the move, especially those who travel unaccompanied or separated from their families, violence infuses daily life and is often part of a continuum. Fear and insecurity are widespread, and impunity prevails. During a recent country visit by the Special Representative, children repeatedly told her that life was unfair and that they saw their neighbourhood as a ghetto of hopelessness, lawlessness and fear.

47. Children experience horrific scenes: the killing of their parents, the rape of their sisters, the forced disappearance of their friends. They are exposed to street crime and community violence, to systematic threats and extortion, and to the harassment of gang members who mobilize support within the school or in their neighbourhood. In some cases, children are manipulated by elements of organized crime and forced to take part in criminal activity, including acting as watchers in places where drugs or arms are trafficked or where smugglers congregate. If children refuse to cooperate, they may pay a heavy price, and may even risk losing their lives. Marginalized children in communities where such activities take place are locked into a vicious cycle of exclusion, stigmatization and violence, as they come to be perceived as criminals themselves, feared by members of their communities and at times criminalized by the authorities.

48. Surrounded by such a devastating reality, children feel ready to embark on a perilous journey of uncertainty and to confront serious risks in the hope of finding a place of safety and security. Girls undertaking this journey face particularly serious risks of abuse and exploitation owing to their youth and gender. Some may be lured by traffickers with false promises of safety, an education or a future job. Others may be fleeing sexual abuse or the threat of a forced marriage; they may even have been sold into marriage by their desperate families, both to avoid the risk of rape and with the hope that the girl will acquire the citizenship of her husband.

49. More often than not, these children fail to benefit from the protection they are entitled to. They can be perceived as interlopers rather than vulnerable victims at risk who cross borders in search of a safe destination. Child migrants may lack proper documentation

or not speak the local language. For the most part, they are simply too frightened to report incidents of abuse or to speak about the trauma they have endured. They do not seek help, including medical help, for fear of a negative impact on pending decisions on their status, or out of fear of arrest or deportation.

50. Many children end up in crowded facilities, often together with adults who are not family members. They may find themselves in places with fast-track proceedings, and in fact at high risk of "fast-return proceedings" where their best interests are hardly considered. They may end up confined in airports, at port facilities or on islands; placed in detention centres, prisons or cells for military personnel; and even put in containers with no windows, at times in complete isolation.

51. Their risk of deprivation of liberty is high. Children may be detained by invoking the need to secure their protection from the risk of disappearance or trafficking, or for the purpose of family tracing or to consider the options for return to their country of origin. Detaining these children, which is never in their best interests, is an additional punishment; the desired aims can be achieved in a different way.

52. While their fate is being decided, children may endure humiliation, physical attacks and sexual abuse. In many cases, they lack access to a child protection authority, to an age- and gender-sensitive protection determination process, to legal representation, to accessible information about their rights or about ways of seeking redress for the acts of violence they may have suffered. This may explain why large numbers of children go missing from reception centres or disappear from the care of child protection facilities or immigration authorities.

53. Time and time again, children on the move experience fear, anxiety, panic, depression, sleep disorders, mental health problems, increased risk of self-harm and an aggravated sense of hopelessness, with a severe impact on their development and well-being. These children have been left very far behind. For them, the ambitious vision of the 2030 Agenda seems distant and illusory.

54. For children on the move, as for any other child who is left behind, we need to transform the continuum of violence that shapes their life into a continuum of protection of their fundamental rights. The world must address these desperate situations urgently. Children's freedom from violence is an ethical and a legal imperative and should not be met with indifference or complacency. It is crucial to strengthen and effectively resource child protection institutions to which children on the move can be referred, and to implement the existing standards and develop adequate monitoring tools to safeguard children's care and safety, to promote durable solutions, to rapidly identify and address risks and to fight impunity.

55. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, together with other international standards, including the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,[14] provide clear guidance on upholding children's rights and preventing and eliminating the risks of violence in the lives of children on the move. Firstly, these standards recognize the imperative to act and to ensure without discrimination the realization of the rights of all children who fall under the jurisdiction of the State. This includes asylum-seeking, refugee, migrant and stateless children, and, in this context, we should recall that a child is born stateless every 10 minutes.

56. Secondly, international standards require the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration in all decisions affecting the child and at all times: upon arrival in a destination country, during relevant proceedings, or when the possibility of return is

[14] General Assembly resolution 71/1.

envisaged. It is crucial to ensure safe, dignified and child-sensitive age-assessment procedures, and in any case of doubt to provide the special protection every child is entitled to. The same principles should apply when the child's legal status is being established or when a request for family reunification is considered. The appointment of a legal guardian is essential to provide support and to defend the child's best interests at every point.

57. Thirdly — and as reiterated in the New York Declaration — the responsibility for the care of children on the move needs to be promptly entrusted to national child protection authorities, rather than left to border or security officials. To be effective, child protection systems dealing with children on the move need to be cohesive and well resourced, with quality services and well-trained staff having the skills to meaningfully interview and communicate with children, understand risks and promote resilience.

58. Inter-agency collaboration among all relevant government departments is essential in this regard, but it is equally important to ensure effective cross-border and regional cooperation, promoting synergies to mobilize support and resources to address the many challenges affecting children on the move and to promote durable solutions and a continuity of care, including to ensure their empowerment, social inclusion and resumption of an independent life and to prevent the risks of revictimization, violence, or any other violation of their rights.

59. Moreover, all incidents of violence against children on the move must be exposed. Children need to feel respected, cherished and supported in their development and well-being. They have the right to feel safe and protected from fear, abuse and exploitation. Impunity needs to end. And sound data and evidence need to be consolidated to inform decisions on violence prevention, early warning and response; to help enhance the skills of professionals and the capacity of institutions; and to sustain and monitor progress and evaluate the impact of interventions. Careful, ethical and participatory evaluation and research involving the children concerned are a crucial dimension of this process.

60. Children's rights are universal, inalienable and interrelated. The right to freedom from violence everywhere and at all times; the right to respect for family unity and to special protection when separated from their families; the right to have any request for family reunification considered in a positive, humane and expeditious manner; and the rights to a legal identity, to liberty and security and to effective alternatives to deprivation of liberty are inherent in the human dignity of every child. Children on the move are entitled to nothing less.

61. But for human rights to be meaningfully enjoyed, it is indispensable to ensure that children on the move have access to child-friendly information and counselling; to justice; and to genuine participation in safe, child- and gender-sensitive procedures and mechanisms, including to seek redress for incidents of violence or to challenge the legality of their deprivation of liberty.

62. In brief, we urgently need to stand up for children on the move and secure their protection because, first and foremost, they are children.

IV. Strengthening regional processes to enhance the protection of children from violence

63. Cooperation with regional organizations and institutions has been a cornerstone of the Special Representative's strategy to accelerate progress in the protection of children from violence. Indeed, regional organizations and institutions are strategic allies in violence-prevention and -elimination initiatives and their institutionalized cooperation with the Special Representative has helped place violence against children at the heart of the

regional policy agenda, enhance the accountability of States and support national implementation efforts.

64. As part of this process, eight high-level regional consultations have been held in the South and Central American, Caribbean, South Asian, Pacific, European and Arab regions; six regional monitoring reports have been issued and periodic review meetings held to assess and accelerate progress. Moreover, six cross-regional round tables have been hosted to enhance cooperation and consolidate progress towards children's freedom from violence.

65. As a result, regional commitments have been strengthened and are currently being aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the adoption of new regional plans on violence against children. In turn, these efforts have translated into the strengthening of national legal standards and public policies, the consolidation of research and monitoring tools, and the promotion of campaigns to support, stimulate and monitor progress in the protection of children from violence.

66. To consolidate this cooperation and accelerate progress in freeing children from violence, the Special Representative organizes an annual high-level round table with regional organizations and institutions. This forum has become a strategic mechanism within the United Nations to engage in policy dialogue, share knowledge and good practices, promote cross-fertilization of experiences, coordinate action and enhance synergies, identify trends and pressing challenges, and join forces to prevent violence and strengthen children's safety and their protection.

67. In May 2016, the Special Representative co-hosted, with the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the sixth annual cross-regional round table, held in Stockholm. The meeting addressed the role of regional organizations and institutions in supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda and mobilizing efforts to reach target 16.2 and the other violence-related Sustainable Development Goal targets. It provided a platform for sharing experiences in the development of regional strategies aligned with the 2030 Agenda and future actions foreseen. Attention was paid to strategies to support the mainstreaming of the violence-related targets in national and subnational plans and the development, where appropriate, of regional and national goals and targets. The role of regional organizations and institutions in mobilizing their member States to address violence against children in their voluntary national reviews for the high-level political forum on sustainable development was also stressed, as was cooperation with other regional entities in review processes. Support to peer learning and participatory processes of national assessment of progress was encouraged through this strategic cross-regional forum and other platforms.

68. A number of regions have already promoted significant initiatives to spearhead this work. This has been particularly evident in the incorporation of violence against children into regional action plans and their explicit alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

69. During the 2016 cross-regional round table, regional organizations and institutions, recognizing the strategic opportunity presented by the 2030 Agenda and the tenth anniversary of the United Nations study on violence against children, expressed a strong commitment to further accelerate and assess progress in eliminating violence against children and to reinforce cooperation. Strategic actions envisaged included support to the further development and implementation of regional plans on violence against children aligned with the 2030 Agenda; mobilizing partnerships and strengthening implementation of comprehensive national strategies for violence prevention and elimination; enacting and enforcing national legislation to ban all forms of violence against children; and enhancing data systems and supporting the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda through strong accountability mechanisms at the national and regional levels.

70. As highlighted below, within individual regions significant developments have also been promoted and concrete results achieved to advance these goals.

71. In Africa, on the occasion of the commemoration by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Special Representative, together with UNICEF and the African Child Policy Forum, presented a review of regional progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study. The conference highlighted progress, challenges and opportunities to promote freedom from violence as part of wider efforts to achieve the African Union Agenda 2063 and the vision of building an Africa fit for its children. The outcomes of the discussion informed the development of Africa's Agenda for Children 2040, formally adopted in November 2016, one of whose core goals is ending violence against children.

72. These developments provide significant impetus for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the African region. Africa's Agenda for Children 2040 contains measurable goals and priority areas which the African Union and its member States commit to reach by 2040, and there are significant achievements to build upon.

73. Indeed, a number of countries in Africa are strengthening their national child protection systems and have undertaken comprehensive household surveys to document the magnitude, nature and impact of violence in childhood. Information from these surveys has supported government advocacy, policy, planning and budgeting as well as the enactment of legislation, including with a view to combating child marriage. Seven countries in Africa have completed surveys (Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), while others are pursuing similar efforts, including Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda.

74. In February 2016, the Special Representative supported the launch of the results of the survey in Nigeria, conducted by the Government in cooperation with UNICEF and the Together for Girls partnership.[15] Nigeria was the first country in West Africa to conduct a national survey on such a large scale. In response to its findings, the Year of Action to End Violence against Children was launched, along with a call to action to federal and state ministries and agencies, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, the media, communities, parents and children to join together to prevent and respond to violence against children. As a key contribution to this process, the Special Representative participated in the launch of the campaign and policy agenda to end violence against children in Lagos State; Cross River State launched its campaign to end violence against children on 16 June 2016, the second state in Nigeria to respond to the call to action.[16]

75. In October 2016, in Malawi, the Special Representative promoted the further implementation of the policy agenda launched during her previous visit undertaken in response to the findings of the 2015 violence against children survey. During the follow-up visit, she paid special attention to the prevention and abandonment of harmful practices, helping to focus national attention on the prevalence of child marriage, abuse associated with sexual initiation ceremonies, attacks against children with albinism and other practices compromising the rights of children, particularly girls.

76. There has been progress on these issues in Malawi, including the adoption in 2015 of the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, which increased the minimum age of marriage to 18 years; the Government's commitment, in November 2016, to align the Constitution with that legislation and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;[17] and the crucial role played by traditional leaders in mobilizing their communities to

[15] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/story/2016-02-25_1431.

[16] See www.unicef.org/nigeria/media_10405.html.

[17] See www.constitutionnet.org/news/malawi-amend-constitution-regarding-age-child.

prevent the early and forced marriage of girls and to ensure their return to school to pursue their education.

77. Harmful practices such as these figured prominently at the Seventh International Policy Conference on the African Child, hosted by the African Child Policy Forum in Addis Ababa in November 2016. The conference highlighted the often fatal forms of violence affecting in particular marginalized and vulnerable children, including cases of infanticide, and attacks on children with albinism or those accused of witchcraft. With a solutions-oriented approach, the conference adopted a call to action to protect all children from violence, promote the implementation of policies and laws and mobilize for dialogue at all levels.[18]

78. The conference built on the successful discussions held in September 2016 during the launch of the African Partnership to End Violence against Children,[19] of which the Special Representative is a member. The Partnership was established to advance collective efforts to comprehensively address all forms of violence against children across the continent. It aims to facilitate the uptake of Africa's Agenda for Children 2040 and the violence-related targets of the 2030 Agenda through collective programming and knowledge-building and -sharing.

79. The Special Representative will continue to enhance her collaboration with the African Union and support further efforts to advance the implementation of its Campaign to End Child Marriage. Significant progress has been made in this regard, including the recent adoption by the Government of Burkina Faso of a comprehensive national strategy on ending child marriage 2016-2025,[20] and the joining of the campaign by the Governments of Cameroon, Liberia and Nigeria. Eighteen African countries have launched the Campaign and in November 2016, the Heads of State and Government of francophone countries adopted a resolution reaffirming their commitment to end all forms of violence against children, including such practices as child, early and forced marriages, and to advance the 2030 Agenda.[21]

80. While many challenges remain, the African continent has unique opportunities to build upon in 2017, including during the celebration of the Day of the African Child, which will be devoted to the theme "The Sustainable Development Goals for children in Africa: accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunity".

81. In Latin America, the Special Representative joined the session of the MERCOSUR Permanent Commission of the Niñ@Sur Initiative devoted to the protection of children from violence and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Member States welcomed the High Time to End Violence against Children initiative, which is being mainstreamed into the regional strategy of follow-up to the United Nations study recommendations, and they reiterated the urgency of investing in violence prevention, including by addressing its root causes and overcoming attitudes and behaviour that condoned violence against children.

82. In the context of her collaboration with the MERCOSUR Permanent Commission of the Niñ@Sur Initiative and the Global Movement for Children, Latin America and the Caribbean section, the Special Representative organized with the Government of Uruguay a regional consultation with children on bullying and cyberbullying. Held in May in Montevideo, the consultation included young participants from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile,

[18] See www.africanchildinfo.net/ipc/files/SeventhIPC-Call-toAction.pdf.

[19] See http://africanchildforum.org/en/index.php/en/?option=com_content&view=article&id=400&Itemid=364.

[20] See www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/national-action-plan-end-child-marriage-burkina-faso/.

[21] See www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/som_xvi_decl_antananarivo.pdf.

Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay and provided a platform for young people to make recommendations for the Secretary-General's report on children's protection from bullying and cyberbullying (see A/71/213, para. 27).

83. Children reflected on their perceptions and experience of bullying and cyberbullying, discussed the root causes and identified strategic measures for prevention and response. They highlighted that bullying was often part of a painful continuum of children's exposure to violence and recognized the particular challenges faced at school, on the way to school and online. The children at the consultation were clear in their call:

> Listen to our voice: bullying hurts and it lasts … urgent action is needed to stop it; violence does not teach good behaviour, being a good model and promoting non-violence conveys a good example for our lives; use dialogue and mediation before you let violence occur! Help us learn about prevention and our rights; help those who care for us so that they can help us better; and don't forget: legislation is important and everyone needs to know it and respect it.

84. In November 2015, the twenty-seventh ASEAN Summit adopted the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children. The Special Representative has been actively promoting its implementation, in collaboration with ASEAN member States, the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.

85. The Regional Plan of Action is framed by the 2030 Agenda and provides a powerful example of how regional cooperation can support national action on the protection of children from violence and advance progress to achieve the violence-related Sustainable Development Goal targets. It proposes concrete actions within a realistic time frame, including the promotion of non-violent approaches to child discipline; the deinstitutionalization of children; the protection of children from online abuse; the promotion of child-friendly justice proceedings, the prevention of deprivation of liberty of children and the promotion of alternatives to detention; and awareness-raising campaigns to break through the invisibility of violence and secure the protection of child victims.

86. During the Special Representative's mission to East Asia in June 2016, she met in Bangkok with the East Asia Regional Inter-Agency Child Protection Working Group, composed of United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, to encourage them to use the strategic opportunity of the Regional Plan of Action and the violence-related Sustainable Development Goal targets to accelerate progress in national-level action.

87. On the same occasion, she participated in a meeting hosted by the Government of Viet Nam with senior officials of ministries of social welfare and development of ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, which will conduct an annual review of implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on the basis of reporting by member States. The meeting helped to further advance national implementation of the Regional Plan of Action and build upon the High Time to End Violence against Children initiative in raising awareness and spurring action towards ending violence against children in ASEAN member States.

88. As part of her commitment to strengthening child participation and engagement with children around the world, the Special Representative was a keynote speaker at the fourth ASEAN Children's Forum, also hosted by the Government of Viet Nam. The Forum provided a platform for children from across ASEAN countries to reflect together on key concerns facing children and young people in the region and to propose recommendations to strengthen the protection of children from violence, to secure online safety and to fight trafficking. In the open debate held between the child representatives, representatives of the ASEAN Commission and the Special Representative, the young participants called for

urgent measures to address emerging threats posed by online abuse and cyberbullying and reaffirmed their decisive role as agents of change in bringing an end to violence.

89. In March 2016, the Special Representative participated as a keynote speaker in the high-level meeting of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children to review progress made and discuss the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region. Significant progress has been achieved during the past 10 years in the institutionalization of the Initiative and in national action to advance implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study. Building upon this process, participants highlighted the unique momentum provided by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to further strengthen the protection of children and to inform the Initiative's new five-year plan. Regional priorities, such as ending sexual exploitation and abuse of children; child labour; and harmful practices, including child marriage, corporal punishment and violence in schools, provide a sound basis for aligning regional and country-level action with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the violence-related Sustainable Development Goal targets.

90. These important conclusions were endorsed by the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children, hosted by the Government of India, which reiterated the important role of the Initiative in promoting progress in the preventing violence against children agenda in South Asia.

91. In July 2016, at an event hosted by the Government of Bhutan, the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children and ILO launched Alliance 8.7: working together to end child labour and modern slavery, to further reinforce the collective efforts to move the 2030 Agenda forward in South Asia. The Initiative's regional action plan to prevent and eliminate child labour and a review of the engagement of the faith and interfaith actors in ending violence against children in South Asia were also launched on that occasion.

92. The Special Representative's collaboration with the Council of Europe has been crucial in strengthening children's freedom from violence across Europe. The Council has been a driver of regional initiatives to promote the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study and support the Special Representative's mandate.

93. In April 2016, in Sofia, the Council launched its new Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), which was developed with the participation of the Special Representative. Children's freedom from violence is at the heart of the Strategy and is mainstreamed in actions concerning the protection of children from online abuse; the promotion of child participation; the development of child-friendly justice; the prevention of deprivation of liberty and the promotion of diversion measures; and the protection of children on the move.

94. The Strategy is designed to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and offers important opportunities to further strengthen the Special Representative's cooperation with the Council of Europe and to enhance support to its member States in their efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goal targets and accelerate progress towards target 16.2. This includes supporting the enactment of legislation to ban all forms of violence and establish child-friendly counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms to address incidents of violence; the development of integrated national strategies on the protection of children from violence; the identification of strategic indicators to monitor progress towards target 16.2; the safeguarding of the rights of children on the move and their protection from violence; and supporting the Council of Europe in its role as a clearing house of sound data and experiences, and as a platform for peer support among Governments.

V. Looking ahead

95. In 2006, the United Nations study on violence against children confronted the international community with the extent, pervasiveness, complexity and impact of violence against children. The mobilization generated by the study and the process of implementation of its recommendations around the world have led to important progress, and States are now better equipped to prevent, eliminate and respond to violence.

96. The mandate of the Special Representative draws attention to both the worst and the best aspects of humankind. The worst is that countless children are exposed to violence that is often concealed but nevertheless pervasive. Children are intentionally targeted in politically driven processes, manipulated in organized crime, obliged to flee violence in their communities, sold and exploited for economic gain, groomed online, disciplined through violent means, sexually assaulted in the privacy of their homes, neglected in institutions, abused in detention centres, bullied in schools, and stigmatized and ill-treated as a result of superstition or harmful practices. Every five minutes, a child dies as a result of violence.

97. Children's exposure to pervasive violence is well documented by United Nations reports, academic evidence and children's own heartbreaking stories. For millions of children around the world, life is defined by two words: fear and pain. For those children, the world has no safe haven. And States are missing the chance to build a better world for all of them.

98. Violence compromises all children's rights. It goes hand in hand with deprivation and high risks of poor health, poor school performance and long-term welfare dependency. In early childhood, the impact of violence is often irreversible. As children grow, cumulative exposure to manifestations of violence becomes a bleak continuum, spreading across children's life cycle and, at times, persisting across generations.

99. But beyond the impact on individual victims and their families, violence is associated with far-reaching costs for society. It diverts billions of dollars from social spending, slowing economic development and eroding States' human and social capital.

100. The mandate of the Special Representative also honours the best of humankind; this comes, not surprisingly, from children themselves. Time and time again, the Special Representative has met children who have emerged from the most terrible nightmares and who yet remain resilient, confident, generous and eager to show the way ahead. In all regions of the world, young advocates join hands with national authorities, civil society and many other allies in raising awareness about the detrimental impact of violence, empowering young people to be the first line of protection from abuse and exploitation, and inspiring many others to build a world where children can grow up respected, nurtured and supported to achieve their ambitions and dreams. Even in the most desperate of situations, children demonstrate hope for a better world and determination to achieve lasting change. This is much more than positive thinking; this is about achieving positive change.

101. Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the world has made tremendous strides towards the realization of children's rights. But the vision of the Convention will not be fully realized unless children's rights become one of the sustaining pillars of society and are embraced as a core value of the dialogue between generations.

102. Recent estimates show that at least one billion children are victims of violence every year. Clearly, much more needs to be done. It is high time to close the gap between international standards, political commitments and action. It is high time to promote a culture of respect for children's rights and of zero tolerance for violence.

103. Ten years after the launching of the United Nations study, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a unique opportunity to renew commitments and reinvigorate action to end violence against children. For the very first time, the dignity of children and their right to live free from violence and from fear are recognized as a distinct priority on the international development agenda. The inclusion of target 16.2 to eliminate by 2030 all forms of violence against children was a breakthrough; the international community must now act to transform this momentum into an unstoppable movement towards a world free from fear and from violence for all children.

104. Guided by the human rights imperative of freeing children from violence, by the evidence gathered in recent years and by the ambitious vision and historic opportunity offered by the 2030 Agenda to promote a quantum leap in violence prevention and response efforts, the Special Representative reaffirms her resolve to mobilize even greater support and action towards a world free from violence against children, in close collaboration with Member States and all other stakeholders, most especially children themselves.

105. In the countdown to 2030, everybody counts. Every world citizen can be an agent of change. And this can inspire others to work to bring about the change we need. Joining hands together, the sum of all forces will be zero: zero violence.